



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S 1999 NPR/OPM FEDERAL EMPLOYEE SURVEY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Empowered and well-trained Federal employees are essential to meeting the Administration's commitment to build an efficient and effective government that provides excellent customer service to its citizens. As reflected in the Department's Performance Agreement with the President, we in the Department of Energy will attempt to continuously improve our corporate management practices.

A key tool to gauge and improve our organizational health is the annual organizational self-assessment. Now entering its 6th year, our Baldrige-based, self-assessment has provided the Department with an excellent, systematic means by which to obtain organizational results and evaluate our corporate management practices. Our self-assessment provides vital information that Heads of Departmental Elements can use to identify and address areas for improvement as they develop their annual improvement plans. For 2000, I encourage Departmental Elements to conduct their Self-Assessments.

In 1998, and again in 1999, another important tool, an extensive survey of Federal employees, was developed and implemented by The National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This survey provides valuable insights into employees' perspectives on reinvention and workplace issues. In 2000, NPR fortified the 1999 Survey by requiring each Agency to post Improvement Plans to address 1999 Survey-related issues on their respective web-sites; and, OPM to post Agency-specific, 1999 Survey results on the OPM web-site.

I support the efforts of the Administration, Department of Energy employees, and other government agencies to improve continuously on behalf of the American people. Upon receiving the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey results, I encourage each Principal Secretarial Officer to meet with his or her Union representatives and other leadership, and ask that they help us meet the NPR requirement by developing an Improvement Plan to address areas helpful to them from a combination of areas identified in the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey and their 2000 Self-Assessment.

We owe the American people our continued best efforts to streamline their government.


Bill Richardson

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BACKGROUND

In 1999, both Government-wide and Department of Energy (DOE) 1998 NPR Survey results were shared with DOE managers via a letter from Secretary of Energy, Bill Richardson, that also required managers to consider and develop an Action Plan incorporating those survey results they deemed applicable as a part of their annual organizational Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment was selected as the vehicle for incorporating the Action Plan because it uses the seven performance excellence criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige (MB) /President's Quality Award: 1. Leadership; 2. Strategic Planning; 3. Customer and Market Focus; 4. Information and Analysis; 5. Human Resource Focus; 6. Process Management, and 7. Business Results. The Office of Performance Excellence was required by the Secretary to review all Departmental Element Self-Assessment reports; and to forward a summary report to the Secretary documenting all Department improvements which was disseminated Department-wide.

The 1998 NPR Survey results were subsequently sent to all federal employees via a memorandum from the Director, Office of Management and Administration.

For the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey, there were 32 questions sent to a randomly selected group of over 32,000 government employees of which 750 were from DOE. The overall response rate was 38% for the entire government, and 35% for DOE in 1999, down from 40% and 49% respectively, in 1998.

Recently, the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey Government-wide and Department of Energy results were reviewed by key officials in DOE, and by the Office of Performance Excellence (MA-6), which has lead responsibility for the Department's NPR activities and the long standing Self-Assessment program. Survey results will be forwarded to DOE employees and managers in accordance with the direction of NPR and DOE.

KEY SURVEY FINDING

TOP SCORES:

While the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey indicated DOE's strengths, given the overall scoring, there is room for improvement even in the areas where the Department exhibits strength

All Departmental Elements are encouraged to examine closely all questions contained within the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey, and to incorporate them as they see fit in the NPR-required Improvement Plan. The following questions illustrate those areas of the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey where DOE ranked highest:

**Electronic access to information needed to do our job. DOE scored 78%.
(The highest score in government was 85% and the lowest score was 37%).
(Question 26)**

**Employees' family/personal life responsibilities supported. DOE scored 70%.
(The highest score in government was 82% and the lowest score was 49%).
(Question 15)**

**Overall quality of work being done in your work group. DOE scored 68%.
(The highest score in government was 84% and the lowest score was 55%).
(Question 32)**

LOW SCORES:

The following was determined upon review of the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey, internal DOE surveys, 1999 Organizational Self-Assessments, and other DOE assessments. The Department will focus its attention broadly on improving the following low scoring, Survey questions. Recognizing there are Departmental Elements performing at very high levels in the following areas, all Elements are again encouraged to review the remaining 1999 NPR/OPM Survey questions, and other DOE assessments, and develop the NPR-required Improvement Plans accordingly.

Government employee hiring process streamlined. DOE scored 8%. (The highest score in government was 30% and the lowest score was 6%). (Question 23)

Performance standards corrective actions taken. DOE scored 16%. (The highest score in government was 51% and the lowest score was 12%). (Question 20)

Mission, vision and values communicated. DOE scored 51%. (The highest score in government was 74% and the lowest score was 35%). (Question 3)

Clarity on how good performance is defined. DOE scored 22%. (The highest score in government was 48% and the lowest score was 14%). (Question 25)

Management and the union(s) work cooperatively on mutual problems. DOE scored 30%. (The highest score in government was 70% and the lowest score was 16%). (Question 21)

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

SHORT TERM STRATEGY

Government employee hiring process streamlined. DOE scored 8%. (The highest score in government was 30% and the lowest score was 6%.) (Question 23) - The Office of Management and Administration has formed a Process Improvement Team comprised of Customers and Human Resource Professionals to deal specifically with improving the process for hiring government employees at Headquarters. The Team will map the current process; explore opportunities for eliminating non-value added steps; streamline current processes through automation and/or collaborative efforts with hiring organizations; and recommend other potential time-saving measures.

Performance standards corrective actions taken. DOE scored 16%. (The highest score in government was 51% and the lowest score was 12%.) (Question 20)

- 0 The Office of Management and Administration has recently issued directives that increase field/Headquarters performance management flexibility to respond to local needs and link managers' response to performance problems to their own performance ratings. At Headquarters, for example, a new performance management program, developed in cooperation with the local union, includes specific supervisory task requirements for placing employees on performance plans, providing feedback, and dealing with poor performance. The plan also calls for employees' plans to have specific measurable tasks and multiple feedback sessions. Because performance periods in this Department cover one year, the effect of these more flexible and new programmatic measures will take some time to be reflected in employee perceptions of how management deals with poor performance.**
- 0 Also, on a DOE-wide basis, steps are being taken to improve accountability and take corrective measures to improve organizational performance. For example, The Secretary of Energy created a Field Management Council (FMC) in April 1999, to improve headquarters and field coordination on crosscutting management issues and to ensure both corporate program integration and the integration of support activities with line programs. All staff and support office policy and guidance which impacts our field sites flows through the Council and holds our program office responsible and accountable for appropriate implementation of policy at their field sites.**
- 0 Another example includes the establishment of the National Nuclear Security Administration created on March 1, 2000, which clarifies lines of**

authority and accountability for defense security functions within the Department.

Mission, vision and values communicated. DOE scored 51%. (The highest score in government was 74% and the lowest score was 35%.) **(Question 3)** - The Department of Energy is currently revising its September 1997 Strategic Plan, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and will deliver an updated Plan to the Congress this summer. A DOE-wide team has completed a final draft of the Plan (after receiving comments throughout the Department) and the draft is now posted on the DOE web site for both Department-wide and public comment. The Plan provides General Goals, Objectives, Performance Goals, and Strategies for the DOE business lines and corporate management activities and clearly reflects the linkage to our resources and results. The Plan also highlights the DOE mission, vision and core values of the Department. After delivery to the Congress, the Department will roll out the Plan to its employees and discuss the commitments we have made as well as our mission and vision.

Clarity on how good performance is defined. DOE scored 22%. (The highest score in government was 48% and the lowest score was 14%.) **(Question 25)** - The Office of Performance Excellence will assess the need for additional consulting services and provide, or cause the provision of the following services to DOE:

- Performance Measurement, Benchmarking Training
- Other services, i.e. Process Improvement, Six Sigma, pre-Energy Performance Excellence Award application guidance, etc.

Management and the union(s) work cooperatively on mutual problems. DOE scored 30%. (The highest score in government was 70% and the lowest score was 16%.) **(Question 21)** - On January 4, 2000 Secretary Richardson issued a Department of Energy wide memorandum urging all DOE organizations and union representatives to rededicate themselves to improving labor management relations and establishing labor-management partnerships at the local site level around the Department where bargaining units exist to focus on important workplace issues of mutual concern. The Secretary also endorsed the establishment of a first ever DOE-wide Partnership Council to be comprised of union officials from DOE's nine different Federal employee unions and high level management representatives from major DOE organizations at Headquarters and the Field. A draft charter for this Council has been developed. The Office of Personnel Management is providing assistance to help finalize the charter and to address specific issues in the President's Executive Order on Partnerships. Target for completion of the charter is the end of Fiscal Year 2000, and initial Council meetings are anticipated before the end of the calendar year.

LONG TERM STRATEGY

As per the Secretary's Agreement with the President, the Secretary will continue to encourage each Departmental Element to conduct their annual organizational Self-

Assessment in an effort to collect, analyze, and improve corporate management practices within DOE. Further, the Secretary will encourage Departmental Elements to help to meet the NPR requirement to develop Improvement Plans which address applicable 1999 NPR/OPM Survey items.

Since the NPR/OPM Survey corresponds to the Department of Energy's Baldrige-based Performance Criteria, each of the 32 NPR/OPM Survey questions are addressed during the conduct of a Self-Assessment, with particular Department-Wide emphasis on the following low ranking areas in the 1999 NPR/OPM Survey:

- **Government employee hiring process streamlined.** DOE scored 8%. (The highest score in government was 30% and the lowest score was 6%.) **(Question 23)** Addressed in the Baldrige 6.2. (Support Processes)
- **Performance standards corrective actions taken.** DOE scored 16%. (The highest score in government was 51% and the lowest score was 12%.) **(Question 20)** Addressed in the Baldrige 1, 5. (Leadership and Human Resource)
- **Mission, vision and values communicated.** DOE scored 51%. (The highest score in government was 74% and the lowest score was 35%.) **(Question 3)** Addressed in the Baldrige 1. 1. (Organizational leadership)
- **Clarity on how good performance is defined.** DOE scored 22%. (The highest score in government was 48% and the lowest score was 14%.) **(Question 25)** Addressed in the Baldrige 4. 1. (Measurement of Organizational Performance)
- **Management and the union(s) work cooperatively on mutual problems.** DOE scored 30%. (The highest score in government was 70% and the lowest score was 16%.) **(Question 21)** Addressed in the Baldrige 6.3, 7.4 (Supplier and Partnering Processes; Supplier and Partner Results)

In addition, where appropriate, the Examiners used in DOE's Energy Performance Excellence Award received augmented training during their annual Malcolm Baldrige Examiner's training to address the elements of the 1999 NPR/OPM survey wherein DOE scored low.

The Process Improvement Team formed to review the hiring process for DOE will also develop performance measures as indicators of customer satisfaction with the hiring and merit promotion processes.

The Office of Performance Excellence will determine the need for Performance Measurement and other improvement techniques training and coordinate and/or develop same; and, will assist Departmental Elements, where needed, in Action Planning/Improvement efforts.

OTHER INFORMATION

Bench marking - The Office of Performance Excellence will continue to use past Self- Assessments, Energy Performance Excellence Award and Hammer Award data to identify "Best in Class" organizations within DOE; and, to identify and assess Government Agencies external to DOE, and to meet with those organizations to surface and incorporate techniques and strategies for improvement within DOE from the "Best In Federal Government".

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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